

# Risks

TUC 

*e-bulletin*

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**HAZARDS  
MAGAZINE**



**Asbestos -  
The hidden killer**

**Hazards at Work**

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**Risks** is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 18,000 subscribers and 1,500 on the TUC website. To receive this bulletin every week, click [here](#). Past issues are [available](#). This edition contains [Useful links](#) [TUC courses for safety reps](#) [Disclaimer and Privacy](#)

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### Useful Links

### **Olympic suppliers 'degrade' workers**

Appalling and degrading conditions are being endured by millions of workers producing sportswear and Olympic branded merchandise, unions and campaigners have warned. The Olympics is a multi-million dollar industry, yet most of the predominately female workforce producing sportswear and Olympic souvenirs for sale on our high streets continue to be paid poverty wages and work in degrading conditions, says the TUC. The union body, along with Labour Behind the Label, unions and human rights campaign groups, is part of the Playfair 2012 campaign calling on the organisers of London 2012 and the Olympic movement to ensure that workers' rights are respected. Play Fair, the international arm of the Playfair 2012 campaign, found 12-year-old child workers, adults earning 14p an hour, and employees made to work up to 15 hours a day, seven days a week, producing Olympic merchandise in the run up to Beijing 2008. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "It's time for the organisers of the London Games, the sportswear industry and the International Olympic Committee to take responsibility for the working conditions in the global supply chains producing these goods." He added: "We are encouraging journalists to delve beyond the PR spin and reveal the reality for workers employed in Olympic supply chains. Acting together, we have the power to bring about change and demand that London 2012 is the first ethical Olympics - providing decent work and dignity for all." Labour Behind the Label's Sam Maher said: "In spite of more than 20 years of codes of conduct adopted by most major sportswear brands, workers still face bullying and harassment, poverty wages, excessive, undocumented and unpaid overtime, and threats to health and safety."

- [TUC news release](#). [NUJ news release](#). [Labour Behind the Label](#). [Playfair 2012](#).

### **Derailment shows why guards are essential**

Rail union RMT has again demanded Scotrail call an immediate halt to plans to extend Driver Only Operation (DOO) on its services after eight people needed hospital treatment as a result of a train derailment on Sunday 6 June. The union said incident the Oban-Glasgow line at Falls of Cruachan followed a similar incident at the same location 13 years earlier, again caused by a landslide. RMT said the same guard, Angus MacColl, was on board both trains and was praised back in 1997 for his professional and calm response as he implemented emergency procedures. This week, ScotRail managing director Steve Montgomery paid tribute to the way the train crew had handled the latest derailing, where carriages burst into flames and hung precariously over a 50 foot drop. "This could have been more serious but for their actions," he said. "They did a tremendous job in difficult circumstances and are a credit to the company." RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "In incident after incident on our railways, going back many years, the safety-critical role of the guard in an emergency situation like Sunday night's has been both recognised and praised by the investigating authorities. The lesson is simple and is staring Scotrail in the face. In an emergency you need both the driver and the guard, working as a team, to secure the incident and to implement safe, evacuation procedures." The union leader added: "Scotrail cannot be allowed to get away with

praising Angus MacColl on one hand and then axing his colleagues from their services on the other. The political leaders at the Scottish government cannot stand idly by while they try to do just that. We are demanding an immediate halt to the Scotrail plans for Driver Only Operation."

- [RMT news release](#). [Scotsman](#). [Morning Star](#). [BBC News Online](#).

### **Unite safety alert after Corus death**

The union Unite is calling on all safety reps to make sure employers take all the necessary steps to prevent fatalities after a member was killed at work. The call for vigilance follows the 23 April death of an electrician working for Corus at their Scunthorpe Concast Plant. Thomas Standerline, 26, was working on a high level access platform when he became trapped and was crushed by an overhead crane that was operating on the crane track a level above. Corus has launched an investigation which also involves Unite reps. Unite national officer for metals Terry Pye commented: "This is a tragic incident where yet another Unite member has been killed at work. We are working with Corus to find the reasons for this accident, and HSE are investigating all of the circumstances surrounding this death. It is important that other employers are aware of this accident so that they can make sure nothing similar can happen elsewhere." He added: "We are calling on all Unite safety reps to raise this alert with their employers and check that, if they have similar arrangements, all necessary steps have been taken to make sure a tragedy such as this cannot happen to them."

- [Unite news release](#). [Scunthorpe Telegraph](#).

### **UCATT slams Australian 'show trial'**

UCATT has said called on the Australian authorities to abandon the 'show trial' of an Australian union rep who stood up for safety. The UK construction union has sent a message of solidarity to its Australian sister union CFMEU and construction worker Ark Tribe, who refused to answer to an anti-union "interrogation squad". The Australian Building and Construction Commissioner (ABCC) is threatening to imprison Tribe for up to six months. UCATT says that after concerns about safety were raised on a site in Adelaide, the ABCC, an anti-union government agency policing construction, was called in "to attack union officials that participated in safety meetings raising issues about site conditions which if left alone could have resulted in injury or death to workers." It adds: "Ark Tribe, a worker on the site has refused to meet the ABCC and inform them of what went on in the meetings." UCATT general secretary Alan Ritchie said his union "stands solidly behind our brothers and sisters working in Australia in fighting the ABCC, a hit-squad pushing anti-trade union law that threatens trade unionists and the safety of all construction workers across Australia." He added: "Ark Tribe is being tried for refusing to attend an ABCC interrogation squad to undermine trade unions, safety and fairness on construction sites." Ritchie criticised the country's ruling Labor government for retaining the ABCC system, introduced by the previous vehemently anti-union Liberal administration. Unions warn

that site deaths have almost doubled since the ABCC system was introduced in 2004. Ark Tribe's trial is scheduled for 15-18 June at Adelaide Magistrates Court.

- [UCATT news release](#). [CFMEU news release](#). [Rights on site](#). [Find out more about Ark Tribe's case](#).

### **Train deaths led to nervous breakdown**

A Hull train driver suffered a nervous breakdown after he was involved in a fatal collision on a railway crossing. ASLEF member David Jarrad, 56, suffered post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and permanent phobic anxiety after the incident in June 2005 when his train hit a car crossing the line between Thorne and Goole. The driver of the car did not survive but the courts found he had caused the tragedy. It was Mr Jarrad's third fatal collision. The two previous incidents, in 1996 and 1999, involved suicides where people threw themselves in front of his train. After the third incident Mr Jarrad tried to continue driving for Northern Rail for 18 months, but the psychological effects of dealing with the incident caught up with him and he ended up taking an overdose. His condition by then had become so bad that he suffered panic attacks when near a train. Mr Jarrad has since retrained as a care assistant but despite having worked in the railway industry since he was 20 and qualifying as a driver in 1993 he is still so anxious around trains he can no longer travel in them. He said: "I thought I was OK but things caught up with me in February 2007 when I overdosed. I'm now working as a care assistant, a job I really enjoy, but I still can't face travelling on trains and become upset if I see programmes about them on TV." Lawyers brought in by ASLEF sought a compensation payout from the insurers of the car driver. While the insurers admitted liability, they denied the driver had caused the crash and the case went to trial at Kingston Upon Hull County Court, where the judge ruled against the insurer. Mr Jarrad has now received a "substantial" payout. ASLEF general secretary Keith Norman said: "Train drivers are always the unacknowledged victims of these incidents. Too many people are killed on crossings each year. We want to see a major review to cease this endless and unnecessary carnage."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#).

### **Ear protection came 30 years too late**

A GMB member who was exposed to dangerous levels of noise in the workplace for over 30 years has been left with occupational deafness and tinnitus. Terence Haywood, 62, has received £13,000 in compensation for the damage to his hearing caused by the noise from his job as a dye caster for Hallams Castings. He still works for the Doncaster based firm, which makes aluminium castings for the electric motor industry. He started at the firm in 1978, but until 2007 he was never provided with hearing protection – this was only provided after he told the company that he had been diagnosed with deafness and tinnitus. He suffers from constant ringing in his right ear and occasional tinnitus in his left ear and has to wear a hearing aid. Hallams Castings originally claimed the case was out of time but Thompsons Solicitors was able to prove it was not. The

personal injury law firm, brought in by GMB, was also able to provide engineering evidence to prove Mr Haywood had been exposed to excessive noise. Hallams Castings eventually settled the claim out of court. Mr Haywood said: "I now have to wear a hearing aid and I find that I'm short tempered because my concentration has gone. I wish I had been more aware of the damage I was doing to my hearing all of those years." Carol Wild from Thompsons Solicitors said: "Mr Haywood's employers fought us every step of the way in this case. They only backed down three days before the trial was due to start. Mr Haywood deserves to be compensated after suffering irreparable damage to his ears."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

### **Union warning on over-crowded schools**

A teaching union is calling for better school facilities after a teacher suffered a serious injury in a cluttered school corridor that was being used as a temporary classroom. NASUWT said the 37-year-old union member permanently damaged her spine after she fell while trying to navigate the corridor at a Hartlepool school. The primary school teacher, whose name has not been released, was attempting to get back to her classroom but the corridor was blocked by up to 18 reception children being taught on the floor. Her foot caught on a dolls' house which was being stored in the corridor and she fell heavily on her hip. Initially she was unable to feel her legs and was diagnosed at hospital with severe whiplash. She was able to return to work, with the help of strong painkillers, six weeks after the incident. A year later, however, she began to experience numbness in her hands and arms. She was diagnosed with four damaged vertebrae in her upper back, a damaged collar bone and ribs. Now, almost four years after the original incident, her spine is out of alignment and she must take strong painkillers regularly. She has been told her back will never fully recover. She said: "Staff had complained about the lack of space on several occasions and the standard answer was that a new building would be ready soon." In a union-backed compensation case, Hartlepool Borough Council admitted liability and settled out of court for £12,000. NASUWT general secretary Chris Keates commented: "Staff should not have to 'make do' and teach in corridors, nor should equipment block people getting safely to and from their place of work." She added: "Schools have a difficult challenge to work within the constraints of their buildings but even temporary solutions to pressure on rooms have to be safe and sensible."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

### *Other news*

#### **US oil spill prompts UK rig action**

Energy secretary Chris Huhne has said the UK government will increase its inspection of drilling rigs and monitoring of offshore compliance with legal standards. In addition to increased scrutiny by his department (DECC), the government has asked a new oil industry-led group, OSPRAG ([Risks 459](#)), to report back on the UK's ability to prevent and respond to oil spills. The government says a

review has been carried out by DECC officials which has found that our existing system is fit for purpose, but in light of the spill in the Gulf "we are strengthening the regime further." Commenting on the "devastating" incident, Chris Huhne said: ""I've had an urgent review undertaken to reassure myself and the public that all appropriate measures are in place around our shores. It's clear that our safety and environmental regulatory regime is fit for purpose. It is already among the most robust in the world and the industry's record in the North Sea is strong. For example, we already separate regulation of operations and safety." But he added "the Deepwater Horizon gives us pause for thought and, given the beginning of exploration in deeper waters West of Shetland, there is every reason to increase our vigilance. Initial steps are already under way, including plans to double the number of annual environmental inspections by DECC to drilling rigs and the launch of a new industry group to look at the UK's ability to prevent and respond to oil spills." A note on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) webpage says the watchdog is "monitoring the situation" in the Gulf and adds: "British regulators are in contact with their counterparts in the United States – the Minerals Management Service (MMS) – to understand the cause of the incident and whether there are implications for safety at offshore operations on the UK continental shelf." It did not indicate if there is to be any increase in HSE's offshore inspections or changes to HSE inspection practices.

- [DECC news release](#). [HSE comment on Deepwater Horizon](#). [The Independent](#).

### **Don't just criticise BP 'criminals', try them**

Can you have serial crimes but no criminal? Critics say BP's directors have proved as slippery as the gulf's oil smeared coastline, with none so far facing criminal charges relating to the Deepwater Horizon disaster or other deadly incidents. A growing number of commentators are now calling for that to change. US president Barack Obama has suggested already that BP chief executive Tony Hayward should lose his job, but others are calling for criminal charges against Hayward and his London-based board. Matthew Rothschild, editor of the US magazine *The Progressive*, commented: "Tony Hayward and the other executives of BP should be tried in criminal court. For manslaughter, for destruction of property, and for criminal negligence. When someone sets fire to the neighbour's house and kills eleven people, and the fire then destroys lots of businesses, you can bet that person would be tried to the fullest extent under the law. BP did all that - and more." High profile US media commentator Jim Hightower commented: "The explosion of BP's Deepwater Horizon well was the inevitable result of deliberate decisions made by avaricious corporate executives, laissez faire politicians and obsequious regulators." Calling on President Obama to take charge of the clean up, he added: "Oh, he should also wring a few corporate necks. Instead of monitoring these criminals, prosecute them — and put the public back in charge of our government." And the ITUC/Hazards green jobs blog notes: "Tony Hayward should be sorry. He should also be in court, explaining why a company that was making profits of \$2.6 million every hour around the clock in the months before the gulf disaster, again and again spills blood for oil." The US authorities are currently investigating whether the firms involved in the operation of the rig are guilty of any criminal acts. Workers have this week alleged BP routinely cut corners, despite safety concerns.

- [The White House blog](#). [US Department of Justice news release](#). [The Progressive](#). [Creators.com](#). [ITUC/Hazards green jobs, safe jobs blog](#) and [related BP criticism](#). [Think Progress](#). [CNN News](#).

### **RAF flew in the face of pregnancy law**

The Royal Air Force (RAF) ignored its risk assessment duties and created an "offensive environment" for an officer who was denied the right to stay in her job when she became pregnant. The woman, whose name has not been released, claimed she was removed from her job and had her promotion prospects delayed because she was pregnant. In an Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) funded case, the tribunal found that the officer had been discriminated against and awarded her more than £16,000. She was on a posting in the Falkland Islands when she informed her superiors that she was 12 weeks pregnant. Her request to stay on in her desk-based job was denied despite her husband, who was also a RAF officer, being based on the island. Instead, she was ordered to return to the UK immediately. As she wanted to be with her husband during her pregnancy she was forced to take leave to return to the Falkland Islands. This meant she missed out on a performance review which delayed her promotion prospects. The tribunal concluded the way she had been treated "had the effect of creating an intimidating, degrading, hostile or offensive environment for her", though said this was not intentional. Its recommendations included calling on the Ministry of Defence to carry out an individual risk assessment for each pregnant woman and to consider adjusting her role to enable her to remain in her post. EHRC's John Wadham commented: "Larger employers such as the Ministry of Defence should be leading the way in showing other organisations how to treat their pregnant workers. This judgment should serve as a reminder of what is expected of employers in these situations."

- [EHRC news release](#). [Leigh Day and Co news release](#).

### **Fewer heart attacks after smoking ban**

There were 1,200 fewer hospital admissions for heart attacks in England in the year after July 2007, when the smoking ban came in, a major study suggests. The 2.4 per cent drop was much more modest than that reported in some areas where similar bans have been introduced ([Risks 425](#)). The Bath University team analysed English hospital admissions between 2002 and 2009. The study, published in the British Medical Journal and commissioned by the Department of Health, is the largest to date on the effects of smoke-free legislation anywhere in the world. Research from Scotland, where a ban was introduced in March 2006, reported a 17 per cent decrease in heart attack admissions in the year after its ban ([Risks 323](#)). First author of the latest paper, Dr Michelle Sims, said: "After the implementation of smokefree legislation there was a statistically significant drop of 2.4 per cent in the number of emergency admissions for myocardial infarction. This implies that just over 1,200 emergency admissions for myocardial infarction were prevented over a 12 month period." The fall recorded in England was an important one, said co-author Dr Anna Gilmore, director of the Tobacco Control Research Group. "Given the large

number of heart attack attacks in this country each year, even a relatively small reduction has important public health benefits," she said.

- Michelle Sims and others. [Short term impact of smoke-free legislation in England: retrospective analysis of hospital admissions for myocardial infarction](#), BMJ Online first, June 2010. [BBC News Online](#).

### **Wide social inequalities in work cancers**

The occupational cancer burden in the UK has been consistently under-estimated and is concentrated almost entirely in certain social classes, a new study shows. The findings were presented this week at the Society of Occupational Medicine's annual scientific meeting in Edinburgh and were trailed last month in a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) research report. The study, which has been criticised for flaws that suggest it knocks thousands off the annual occupational cancers toll, still suggests the long-defended HSE official estimates have fallen short by at least 2,000 deaths a year ([Risks 445](#)). The research suggests that over 8,000 people die from work-related cancer in the UK each year. This compares with 3,000 people who lose their lives in road traffic accidents or 180 who die in "accidents" at work. The study shows that people working in a broad range of industries are at risk. These include those working in construction, metal working, personal and household services, mining, land transport, publishing, retail and catering, farming and several manufacturing sectors. "There is a social inequality in occupational cancer risk, which is concentrated in manual workers and lower employment grades. This means that many of the industries with workers at risk don't have access to good occupational health advice so proper risk assessments are not undertaken," said Dr Olivia Carlton, president of the Society of Occupational Medicine "The missed opportunity is that we know many of the culprits and how to control them." The study identifies the chemical or exposure circumstances that contribute to the current cancer burden. Whilst asbestos comes out top, other substances such as crystalline silica, particulates from diesel engine exhausts, paints and mineral oils were all found to present a serious public health risk. Five of the top ten on the list are all commonly found in construction.

- [SOM meeting](#). Lesley Rushton and others. Occupational and cancer in Britain, British Journal of Cancer, volume 102, pages 1428–1437, 2010 [[abstract](#)]. Related HSE report: [The burden of occupational cancer in Great Britain](#), research report 800, HSE, 2010 [[pdf](#)].

### **More sickness policies, fewer sick days**

The average UK worker took 6.4 days off through sickness last year, the lowest number since 1987, a survey by employers' organisation the CBI suggests. This compares with 6.7 days in 2007, the last year surveyed. The CBI/Pfizer Absence and Workplace Health Survey had 241 respondents from the public and private sector, which together employ almost 1.3 million people. Employees took 180 million sick days last year, the survey findings suggest. Katja Hall, CBI director of employment policy, called for

further reductions in the absence rate, adding: "Improved rehabilitation and workplace health policies are a key part of achieving this, but so is ensuring that absence, where it occurs, is justified." Dr Berkeley Phillips, UK medical director at Pfizer Ltd, commented: "The survey showed that 95 per cent of organisations had a formal absence policy - a rise of 10 percentage points compared with 2007." He added the report "mirrors a change in the attitude of both employers and policymakers, who are recognising the direct and indirect benefits of investment in the health and well-being of the UK workforce." He said: "We have long known that mental health, back pain and other musculoskeletal disorders are the leading causes of long-term absence, and this year's CBI report reinforces this."

- [CBI news release](#). [BBC News Online](#). [The Independent](#).

### **Security firm fined for poisoning**

A Glasgow-based security firm has been fined £7,000 following the poisoning death of a construction site security guard. Thomas Fraser, 37, died of carbon monoxide poisoning at an on-site flat used as a base for employees. He had been working as a security guard for Alpha Group Security Ltd on the construction site in Hamilton. In March 2010, Clyde Valley Housing Association Ltd, which subcontracted Alpha Group Security Ltd, was fined £70,000 after pleading guilty to criminal safety offences ([Risks 452](#)). In a prosecution last week of the security firm, Hamilton Sheriff Court heard a portable power generator was operated inside the flat without appropriate ventilation and, on 6 February, 2008, Mr Fraser was overcome by a build up of carbon monoxide fumes and died. Alpha Group Security Ltd pleaded guilty to criminal safety breaches. Following the case, HSE inspector Adrian Tinson said: "It should not be assumed that someone knows how to operate equipment. Responsible management of risk should have ensured the safe set up and use of the portable petrol generator in a well-ventilated area which could have avoided this unnecessary death."

- [HSE news release](#).

### **Out of control lift kills lift engineer**

A defunct Kent-based lift company has been ordered to pay £45,000 in fines and costs following the crushing death of a self-employed lift engineer. J Brown Services Ltd was prosecuted following an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after 35-year-old Andy Bates died while completing the installation of a new lift at a site near Oxford Street in Central London. On 6 December 2005, he was working alone on the lift's wiring while standing on the roof of the lift car. The cable of a control used to move the lift was severed when it became wrapped around a bolt protruding from the lift shaft wall. This led to a rogue command causing the lift to start moving upwards. Mr Bates became trapped between the top of the lift car and the top of the doorway as it travelled upwards, suffering fatal crush injuries. Neither Mr Bates, nor his assistant Liam Brown, had experience of installing the type of lift control system being fitted at the site. The Old Bailey heard

the main contractor carrying out the work was Swallow Lifts Installations, which sub-contracted the work to a specialist lift engineer it had worked with previously. However, due to delays the sub-contractor had to leave the job uncompleted. Swallow then sub-contracted the completion and testing of the lift to J Brown Services Ltd who employed Mr Bates to undertake the final phases of work. The company pleaded guilty to a criminal safety breach and was fined £20,000 and £25,000 costs. J Brown Services Ltd has now stopped trading and has limited financial resources, HSE said.

- [HSE news release.](#)

### **Firm guilty after young worker's death**

Flowserve (GB) Ltd has been fined £150,000 following the death of a 21-year-old employee. The prosecution at Lewes Crown Court related to the 7 May 2008 death of Philip Locke, who received fatal injuries when carrying out a pressure test on a high pressure valve. It is believed that during the test, the vent valve became detached from the machine and hit Mr Locke at high speed, causing fatal chest injuries. An HSE investigation found the company had not carried out an adequate risk assessment and had failed to recognise the risk of parts, such as the vent valve, detaching during the pressure testing. The vent valve had not been installed correctly and there should have been a guard on the back of the machine which would have prevented the vent valve injuring Mr Locke when it separated from the machine at high pressure. Flowserve (GB) Ltd pleaded guilty to a criminal safety breach and was fined £150,000 and full costs of £66,838. HSE inspector Russell Beckett said: "As this case tragically shows, this type of work needs to be properly managed when machines are being used, as well as when they are just being tested, in order to reduce risks." He added: "Had Flowserve (GB) Ltd carried out a specific risk assessment on the machine it would have realised the process was unsafe. The company could easily have modified the system of work and the death of Mr Locke could have been prevented."

- [HSE news release.](#)

## *International News*

### **Canada: Deathbed reprieve for killer industry?**

The battle to end Canada's export of deadly asbestos may be about to be lost, a top human rights group has warned. Kathleen Ruff of the Rideau Institute says: "Economically, the industry is on its deathbed," but adds that it has reason to believe it will soon receive a multi-million dollar bail-out from Canada's federal and Quebec governments. Writing in the Toronto Star, she warns: "Apart from the moral issue of exporting asbestos disease for profit, taxpayers might want to take note of how two supposedly business-minded political leaders are risking public funds and Canada's international political capital to resuscitate an industry that is notorious for its record of economic disaster and public health tragedy." She adds that Quebec premier Jean Charest is on the verge of giving the industry a Can\$58 million (£38m) loan to finance a new,

underground Jeffrey mine. He has set two conditions: that the workers sign a five-year contract; and that they put 10 per cent of their wages into a trust fund for five years, creating a reserve of \$10 million that taxpayers would get if the mine fails and taxpayers have to pay the \$58 million loan guarantee. The industry tried unsuccessfully to get financing from private investors. "If the negotiations currently underway succeed, the new mine will open shortly. It will export 200,000 tonnes of asbestos every year for the next 25 years to Asia and, the industry hopes, to Africa, where protections are virtually non-existent and resulting suffering and death will be enormous for decades to come," Ruff writes. She says Canada's prime minister, Stephen Harper, "has promised to provide international political protection to stop the industry being regulated." Ruff concludes: "Premier Charest and prime minister Harper are about to give the asbestos industry a new life for the next quarter century. History will not forgive this betrayal of our country and of common human decency."

- [Toronto Star](#).

### **Europe: Stress hurts workers, but so what?**

Most European company bosses are aware of serious stress problems in their workplaces, but most opt to do nothing concrete about it. New data from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) shows 79 per cent of European managers are concerned by work-related stress, but less than a third of companies have set procedures to deal with it. Employee involvement is crucial to successful interventions, Europe's largest ever health and safety survey concluded. Commenting on its 'European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks' (ESENER) findings, EU-OSHA director Jukka Takala told a Barcelona conference: "With the financial crisis in full swing, 79 per cent of European managers voice their concern about stress at work, which is already recognised as an important burden on European productivity. But despite the high levels of concern, it is clearly worrying that only 26 per cent of EU organisations have procedures in place to deal with stress. The ESENER survey highlights the importance of providing effective support for enterprises to tackle stress, which will be crucial in ensuring we have the healthy productive workforce needed to boost European economic performance and competitiveness." The survey found 42 per cent of management representatives consider it more difficult to tackle psychosocial risks, compared with other safety and health issues. Workplaces with employee participation are much more likely to see successful health and safety measures implemented. The survey found 84 per cent of companies with formal on-site employee representation have an occupational safety and health (OSH) policy or action plan, compared to only 71 per cent of companies without formal representation. Measures to deal with psychosocial risks such as violence, stress and bullying are applied about twice as frequently by enterprises consulting their employees than by those designing interventions without the participation of employees.

- [European Agency news release](#) and [ESENER survey results](#).

## **Global: Union work gets more deadly**

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of trade unionists murdered, with new figures revealing there were 101 killings in 2009 – up 30 per cent over the previous year. The latest Annual Survey of Trade Union Rights, published this week by global union confederation ITUC, also reveals growing pressure on fundamental workers' rights around the world as the impact of the global economic crisis on employment deepened. Of the 101 trades unionists murdered, 48 were killed in Colombia, 16 in Guatemala, 12 in Honduras, six in Mexico, six in Bangladesh, four in Brazil, three in the Dominican Republic, three in the Philippines, one in India, one in Iraq and one in Nigeria. Twenty-two of the Colombian trade unionists who were killed were senior trade union leaders and five were women, as the onslaught of previous years continued. The rise in violence in Guatemala and Honduras also followed a trend developing in recent years. ITUC general secretary Guy Ryder commented: "This year's ITUC survey shows that the majority of the world's workers still lack effective protection of their rights to organise trade unions and bargain collectively. This is a major factor in the long-term increase in economic inequality within and between countries. Inadequate incomes for much of the world's workforce helped cause the global economic crisis, and is making it much harder to put the economy on a path of sustainable growth."

- [ITUC news release](#) and [survey](#), [video](#) and [multimedia resources](#).

## **Mexico: States forces back 'homicide' mine**

Unions have condemned an assault by heavily armed federal riot police on striking mineworkers at the Cananea copper mine near the US border. On Sunday 6 June at about 10pm, hundreds of police surrounded the mine, which has been occupied by the miners, and used tear gas to dislodge the workers. The union office was also attacked. Four hours after the raid, 20 state patrol cars escorted Grupo México back into the Pasta de Conchos mine, enabling the company to retake possession. Sixty-five miners were trapped underground on 19 February 2006 in a methane explosion at the Grupo México mine. Many of the miners that died were members of the Mexican Miners' and Metalworkers' Union (SNTMMSRM). More than 1,000 members of the union have been on strike at the mine since 30 July 2007. The union action precipitated measures that included the illegal removal of Napoleon Gómez as the union's general secretary after he called the incident an act of 'industrial homicide'. "Mexico's president, Felipe Calderon, has launched a reign of terror against working people," said Leo W Gerard, international president of the US-based United Steelworkers union USW. Global union federations IMF and ICEM have both sent letters to President Calderon, calling for an immediate end to the Mexican government's use of force against workers who are legally and rightfully defending their rights.

- [IMF news release](#). [USW news release](#).

## Resources

### **REACH: an opportunity for trade unions**

The marketing of chemicals - especially those that could harm human health - has been covered by the EU-wide REACH regulations since 1 June 2007. But 'REACH: an opportunity for trade unions', a new publication from the trade union research institute ETUI, warns that the law alone will not necessarily mean better prevention of workplace chemical risks. It concludes real progress, including outlawing the most toxic chemicals from workplaces, "will not happen unless union representatives take ownership of the law." ETUI says its guide will "help them do that vital front-line job."

- REACH: an opportunity for trade unions. Putting knowledge to work in the workplace, Tony Musu, ETUI, 2010. ISBN 978-287452176-8. Price: 10 Euros. [ETUI publications notice](#) and contents and preface [[pdf](#)].

## Events and Courses

### **TUC courses for safety reps**

COURSES FOR SEPTEMBER 2010 to DECEMBER 2010

- [Northern](#), [North West](#), [Southern & Eastern](#), [Yorkshire & Humber](#), [South West](#), [Midlands](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#)

## Useful Links

- Visit the TUC [www.tuc.org.uk/h\\_and\\_s](http://www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s) website pages on health and safety. See what's on offer from TUC Publications and What's On in health and safety.
- Subscribe to Hazards magazine, supported by the TUC as a key source of information for union safety reps.
- What's new in the HSC/E and the European Agency.
- HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA. Tel: 01787 881165; fax: 01787 313995